

PETER JOHNSON

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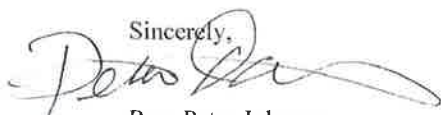
Dear DA Creuzot:

You cannot pull a weapon on an innocent person, not even if you are a police officer. You cannot shoot them with a taser either, or slam their mom, who is also innocent, onto the ground. If you do, the person in charge of enforcing our laws is obligated to take action or, at least, speak up. Last week, we were disappointed that you did neither in response to the DeSoto Police Department's brutal treatment of Sammie Anderson and her family that occurred on August 17, 2018. We were also disappointed that you did not extend them basic courtesies consistent with Texas' Crime Victims Act, such as a phone call explaining your decision. Your office only sent a 4-sentence letter that the family had to learn about through the grapevine. The Dallas Morning News has dedicated more time, effort, and ink than your office or the police to investigating what happened and how 86% of the police's body cameras mysteriously failed precisely on cue to miss recording the worst of it.

Ms. Anderson's sons were arrested on false charges that were ultimately dismissed. Anyone who wonders, "Since the charges were dismissed, what's the big deal?," has never been on the receiving end of our justice system. Ms. Anderson lost her job after missing work due to injuries caused by being slammed forcefully onto hot asphalt. Two of her sons also lost their jobs due to the resulting false arrests. Jobs were not all the family lost. They also lost their home and they lost their faith in our justice system. It's easy to forget that the family called the police for help, which Ms. Anderson now says, "[W]as the worst decision I've ever made as a mom."

You could have restored some of the family's lost trust by at least explaining your refusal to pursue charges against, or even admonish, the excessive and unnecessary use of force by the officers involved. I reviewed the family's case with one of the civil rights attorneys I work closely with: David Henderson of Ellwanger Law. We feel obligated to help ensure that no family suffers the way they have. We understand that you may not entirely agree with our assessment of their case. We also understand that your office may view what happened through a different lens than civil rights lawyers and activists. However, our criticism rests largely on your decision to say so little to justify not doing more. Ms. Anderson and her family deserve better than a 4-sentence letter and, frankly, so do the police, if your office believes the officers were unfairly accused of wrongdoing.

Though it is rarely used, Article 20.09 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure allows any credible person to present information to a grand jury for offenses liable to indictment. We feel obligated to present information regarding Sammie Anderson's case to the grand jury for consideration; however, before seeking to do so, we would like to make sure we are not duplicating work your office has already done. We cannot tell from your letter whether you presented the family's case to a grand jury or simply decided, on your own, not to pursue any charges. Please contact me at (214) 680-9233 so that we can discuss the Anderson's case in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Rev. Peter Johnson